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Exploring Traditional Sex-Role Stereotypes  
and Gendered Misconceptions in Intimate Partner Violence

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Submitted in Partial Completion of the  
Requirements for Commonwealth Honors in Psychology

Bridgewater State University

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### Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an issue that affects millions of people and yet many people in the United States base all that they know about the issue on myths. These myths surrounding IPV (e.g., the victim must have provoked their perpetrator) often lead an individual to blame the victim for what has happened. Previous research has shown that the overwhelming amount of victim blaming that occurs related to these accepted myths is connected to a traditionalist view of sex-role stereotypes (Esqueda & Harrison, 2005). While this connection has been shown through research, the specific role that gendered assumptions about masculinity and femininity (e.g., physicality and power) play in these myths has yet to be examined. The present study examined the connection between traditional sex-role stereotypes and gendered assumptions in IPV cases within a sample of college students and a general population sample. A questionnaire methodology was used to measure the adherence to these myths and assumptions. Although several of the expected associations were not significant, it was suggested that individuals who adhered to IPV myths and traditional sex-role stereotypes also rated some gendered assumptions (e.g., the victim is feminine) as likely in IPV cases. Furthermore, results suggested that students were unsure of the likelihood of characteristics of “atypical” cases (e.g., homosexual couples). One potential implication of the present study is suggesting the restructuring of college courses to place a focus on “atypical” victims.

## Exploring Traditional Sex-Role Stereotypes and Gendered Misconceptions in Intimate Partner Violence Cases

Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects as many as 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men every year (Smith et al., 2017). Such statistics may be shocking, but they only include instances of IPV that are reported. Researchers estimated that from 2003 to 2012, approximately only 55% of IPV cases were reported to police (Truman & Morgan, 2014). Previous research offers various explanations as to why victims do not report abuse, including fear of further violence or retaliation, protecting the offender due to a close social bond, privacy concerns, and police leniency towards the offender (Felson, Messner, Hoskin, & Deane, 2002). Additionally, many victims fear that they will be blamed or not believed. Researchers found that 43% of IPV victims who had previously called the police felt as though they had been discriminated against because they did not meet the expectations of “legitimate” victimization (National Domestic Violence Hotline, 2015). One of the many societal myths regarding IPV is that only some victims are legitimate (i.e., perceived as typical), such as heterosexual women subjected to physical violence (Carlyle, Slater, & Chakroff, 2008). Furthermore, adherence to these myths can play a role in a service provider’s (e.g., police officer) response to an IPV victim (Flood & Pease, 2009). The prevalence of these myths has been examined in various populations, including police officers, but there is a lack of research specifically investigating the role of sex and gender norm beliefs about intimate relationships (e.g., physicality and power; Scarduzio, Carlyle, Harris, & Savage, 2017) within these IPV myths. Understanding myths about IPV is vital for criminal justice professionals to provide supportive responses because the likelihood that a victim will report abuse decreases when there is an absence of supportive behaviors (Flood & Pease, 2009). The present research examined myths surrounding IPV, tested the role that traditional sex-role

stereotype beliefs may play in endorsing such myths, and explored implications for supporting various IPV-related laws. An additional goal of the present study was to further research the prevalence of such attitudes and perceptions within students who may enter professions that work with victims.

Throughout the present work, the term intimate partner violence (rather than domestic violence) was used to describe violence between intimate partners<sup>1</sup> rather than other familial relationships. The most common forms of IPV are physical, sexual, stalking, and psychological aggression (CDC, 2017). The present research focused on physical violence due to relevant gender norms, including social acceptance of aggression within men more so than within women. Research suggests that the male gender role encourages aggression (Eagly & Steffen, 1986) by associating men with being tough and dominant compared to women (Fasteau, 1974). Likewise, men are frequently described with words such as assertive, dominant, and independent, while women are typically expected to be affectionate, sensitive, and submissive (Lueptow, 1984).

The cultural promotion of male dominance and aggression may explain why IPV is disproportionately perpetrated by men against women. A special report published by the Department of Justice states that from 2003 to 2012, 82% of reported IPV cases involved female victims (Truman & Morgan, 2014), and as many as 92% of cases involve male perpetrators (Hester, 2009). While such published statistics can be useful in assisting the public in understanding IPV, it is important to be cautious when interpreting them. Victims of IPV are predominantly women, but a problem arises when the public makes overgeneralizations and

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<sup>1</sup> The NVAWS defines an intimate partner as current and former dates, spouses, and cohabiting partners, with cohabiting meaning living together at least some of the time as a couple. This definition also includes both same-sex and opposite sex couples (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006).

overlooks the victims of cases perceived to be atypical<sup>2</sup>. These statistics are used as a basis for false assumptions that only certain types of people are victimized by their intimate partners (i.e., “legitimate” victims). For instance, people often assume that the LGBTQ community is not affected by IPV at the same rate that heterosexual individuals are. However, 43.8% of lesbian women and 61.1% of bisexual women have experienced some form of IPV in their lifetime, in comparison to 35% of heterosexual women (Smith et al., 2017). Additionally, 26% of gay men, 37.3% of bisexual men, and 31% of heterosexual men have experienced some form of IPV (Smith et al., 2017). Such beliefs may explain why LGBTQ victims of IPV have reported that providers were mostly unhelpful because they acted as though LGBTQ people were “invisible” (Renzetti, 1996). It is therefore important to not overlook the IPV cases that involve individuals in the LGBTQ community (Smith et al., 2017) and victims that are heterosexual men (Truman & Morgan, 2014).

### **Intimate Partner Violence Myths**

An individual’s perceptions of and response to victims of IPV is often heavily influenced by the degree to which they adhere to common myths about IPV (Policastro & Payne, 2013). Previous literature suggests that these myths exhibit character blame and behavior blame towards the victim, minimization of the seriousness of the abuse, and excusal of the perpetrator (Peters, 2008). For example, these myths include that the victim is to blame for provoking their abuser and that the victim always has the choice to leave an abusive relationship (Westbrook, 2009). Men and women show varying levels of adherence to IPV myths (i.e., men have been shown to adhere to IPV myths more than women; Bryant & Spencer, 2003; Flood & Pease, 2009) and do

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<sup>2</sup> I should note that there is a “gender symmetry” debate that has been extremely influential in academia in recent years. This debate is mainly about the assumption that women perpetrate IPV at similar rates to men. I do not intend to make any claims on either side of the debate. Rather, I aim to recognize that statistics regarding IPV victimization show that most cases involve female victims.

so for different reasons. Women adhere to these myths often to reduce underlying thoughts that they could become a victim of IPV, while men often adhere to these myths to avoid any potential blame for perpetration of IPV (Westbrook, 2009). Furthermore, IPV myths exist within a framework of negative attitudes toward women (Peters, 2008). While scales have been developed to measure the degree to which individuals adhere to such myths (e.g., Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale; Peters, 2008) they are framed in a heterosexual context, leaving a gap regarding the role that sex role attitudes would play in an atypical context of IPV.

Previous research has shown that people often use victim-blaming statements and attitudes to justify why IPV occurs (Worden & Carlson, 2005). Furthermore, the use of these justifications lowers the chance that the victim will seek help (Mendoza, 2016). When a victim is blamed for their own victimization, it often leads them to believe that they are deserving of further victimization and that they do not deserve to receive formal support and services (Weingarten, 2016). Therefore, understanding the connection between belief in IPV myths and how individuals respond to victims is especially important to researchers due to the potential impact it could have on victims' help-seeking behaviors.

A large focus of the present study was on the common notion that IPV does not occur to individuals that violate the expectation of a typical or "legitimate" victim. For example, a homosexual individual or a male victim does not match most people's preconceptions of who is a likely victim of IPV. Much of the research regarding attitudes towards victims of interpersonal violence has focused on rape myth acceptance and has suggested that victim-blaming attitudes are connected to commonly held traditional beliefs about women, gender, and sexuality (Barnett, Hale, & Sligar, 2017). Although it is an understudied topic in comparison to rape myth

acceptance, the relationship between IPV victim-blaming and traditional beliefs has been found in previous studies (Gustafson, 2005).

### **Traditional Sex-Role Stereotypes**

Sex-roles are defined as the socially accepted traits that men and women are supposed to have and suggest a proper way for people to portray themselves based on their sex (Bem, 1981). Furthermore, the traditional sex-role ideology includes the belief that a woman is “weak, vulnerable, and in need of protection” and meant to complete the duties of housewife and mother and a man is meant to provide for the weak woman (Larsen & Long, 1988). Traditional sex-role beliefs have become deep-rooted in society through gendered segregation of the roles that are expected of one’s sex (Vogel, Wester, Heesacker, & Madon, 2003). Research has shown a relationship between traditional attitudes about sex-roles and perceptions of IPV victims, specifically focusing on the expectations of a victim’s sex/gender (Flood & Pease, 2009). For example, individuals that adhere to traditional sex-role beliefs are more likely to minimize the seriousness of violent situations. Additionally, men who adhere to traditional gender-role attitudes are often more accepting of IPV perpetration (Willis, Hallinan, & Melby, 1996). Furthermore, individuals with sexist beliefs are likely to blame the victim in an IPV case in which a female victim is depicted as violating traditional sex-role stereotypes (Yamawaki, 2012).

When a case of IPV is inconsistent with traditional sex-role expectations, such as a feminine-looking female perpetrator, people are more likely to adhere to victim blaming attitudes because traditional sex-roles have been violated (Wasarhaley, Lynch, Golding, & Renzetti, 2017). While research has shown that these sex-role beliefs are based on socially accepted ideas of masculinity and femininity, there is a gap in previous research examining this in the context of IPV myths. However, prior research has looked at traditional notions about masculinity and



femininity within the context of rape myths and has shown participants who adhere to such notions use them as cognitive justifications for victimization (Grubb & Turner, 2012).

### **The Role of Education in IPV Myths**

Multiple studies have shown that young men with lower levels of education (i.e., freshman year of college) are more likely to adhere to victim-blaming statements than men with higher levels of education (i.e., senior year of college), specifically that the victim always has the choice to leave and that the victim “provoked her husband” (Bryant & Spencer, 2003; Worden & Carlson, 2005). Additionally, individuals who are not college educated are more likely to agree with the statement that women, if they truly wanted to, could find a way to leave an abusive relationship (Nabors, Dietz, & Jasinski, 2006). This may suggest that receiving a college education enhances a person’s understanding of IPV, specifically their understanding of a victim’s circumstances. Policastro and Payne (2013) found that students at earlier stages of their education agreed with statements such as “I don’t understand why victims don’t leave” and “I don’t believe it is difficult to leave” at a higher rate than students at later stages of their education. There is some research that has found the type of college education one receives (e.g., college major or nature of courses taken) influence an individual’s adherence to IPV myths. For example, it has been shown that students who take relevant courses (i.e., a college level forensic psychology course) show lower levels of myth endorsement following the completion of such courses (e.g., myths about mental illness and violence; Shaw & Woodworth, 2013). Overall findings from existing literature suggest that a higher level of knowledge about victimology lowers the likelihood that a student would actively blame the victim (Fox & Cook, 2011). The present study extended previous research (e.g., Fox & Cook, 2011; Policastro & Payne, 2013; Shaw & Woodworth, 2013) by examining the role that education plays in victim-blaming

behaviors and adherence to IPV myths with a focus on participants who were receiving an education in an undergraduate major that is relevant to career paths that may work with victims, such as law enforcement or victim services. Additionally, previous research that focused on participants receiving an education has found a positively correlated relationship between psycho-legal myth endorsement and beliefs about the “tough-on-crime” approach (Shaw & Woodworth, 2013). The present study intended to further examine this relationship by measuring attitudes towards IPV laws such as mandatory arrest and officer’s discretion.

### **The Present Study**

Previous research on the prevalence of IPV myth acceptance and victim blaming has focused on differences in participant demographic information such as gender, sociocultural background, and age (Flood & Pease, 2009; Robertson & Murachver, 2009). The present research was an attempt to replicate previous findings that participants who more strongly endorsed sex-role stereotypes would be likely to adhere to IPV myths (e.g., “if a woman doesn’t like it, she can leave; Hypothesis 1A). I also intended to replicate studies that have shown higher rates of IPV myth acceptance in men compared to women (Hypothesis 1B; Flood & Pease, 2009). The present study also attempted to uncover the connection between adherence to sex-role stereotypes and gendered misconceptions that surround IPV. The association between sex-role stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes has been established, but it was unclear how notions of masculine and feminine attributes (e.g., physicality and power) shape people’s attitudes and responses to IPV cases. I hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between the adherence to sex-role stereotypes, IPV myths, and gendered assumptions about masculinity and femininity (Hypothesis 2). Specifically, participants who more strongly endorsed sex-role stereotypes and IPV myths were expected to believe gendered assumptions (e.g., IPV victims are

typically female) and hold typical sex-role beliefs surrounding physicality (e.g., the perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim) and power (e.g., the victim has little power in the relationship) about abusive partnerships.

The present study investigated perceptions of IPV in a sample of undergraduate students in majors that often lead to helping professions. I employed a purposive sample of students majoring in Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work because they typically enroll in courses that address gender, victimization, and crime; it is of interest to these professional fields whether relevant courses are educating the future professionals effectively. Taking such courses could teach students to reject IPV myths or participate in victim-blaming, with the intention of improving their response to situations involving victims. I expected that there would be a lower rate of acceptance within the participants that had taken victimization-related courses in the student sample when compared with students who had not taken victimization-related courses and the general population sample (Hypothesis 3).

Finally, I examined the association of IPV myth beliefs with support for various IPV-related laws. I did not have a specific prediction about the way that attitudes would relate to the agreement with specific IPV laws, so the analyses were exploratory. I also explored the endorsement of IPV-related laws and punitive responses to the perpetrator and how they correlated with the completion of courses that address relevant topics (e.g., victimization).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The initial sample of participants were students from Bridgewater State University ( $N = 139$ ), a medium-sized public university in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. They were recruited through flyers that were disseminated via listservs and posted in various locations across the

campus. Participants were incentivized by being entered into a raffle for a \$50 prize. Four winners were selected. Participants from any major and class level were eligible to participate, but a specific interest was expressed for participants from the Criminal Justice, Psychology, Social Work, and Sociology departments. There were many participants who failed to complete many of the questionnaires ( $n = 54$ ) and we were not able to use any of the data in the analyses. Five participants consented and then did not complete any of the study, 10 participants dropped out in the demographic questionnaire, and 34 participants dropped out at the first IPV questionnaire item (an open-ended question), 4 dropped out after answering only the open-ended question, and 1 dropped out after answering a few of the victim/perpetrator rating questions. One participant was excluded from analyses due to failure of the attention check questions. Therefore, our final sample<sup>3</sup> ( $N = 84$ ) included 34 Criminal Justice majors, 39 Psychology majors, 5 Social Work majors, 4 Sociology majors, and 19 participants who selected “other” as their major. The “other” category included majors within humanities, business, sciences, and education. Participants were asked about their intended career and 22 participants (26%) stated that they intended to pursue a relevant “helping” career (e.g., victim’s advocate, law enforcement, and psychologist). Participants’ self-identified gender included 13 males, 70 females, and 1 other. Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 52. The mean age was 22.67 ( $SD = 6.01$ ). The sample was 90.5% White/Caucasian, 4.8 % Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.8% Black/African American, 2.4% Hispanic Latino, 3.6% Native American, and 2.4% other. The sample was 79.8% heterosexual,

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<sup>3</sup>Due to the high rate of attrition, we conducted several analyses to test whether there were demographic differences between those who completed the study and those who did not. We looked at all available demographic information (i.e., gender, college major, level of religion, and political attitudes). Participants that dropped out ( $M = 21.04$ ,  $SD = 3.16$ ) were, on average, about 1.5 years younger than the participants in the final sample ( $M = 22.67$ ,  $SD = 6.01$ );  $t(129.89) = -2.04$ ,  $p = .043$ . Approximately 25% of the participants who dropped out were non-white while only about 10% of the participants who completed the study were non-white;  $\chi^2(2, 138) = 5.39$ ,  $p = .020$ .

3.6% homosexual, 10.7% bisexual, 3.6% other, and 2.4% of participants preferred not to respond.

The second sample of participants ( $N = 384$ ) were collected using Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an Amazon-run crowdsourcing marketplace. “Workers” complete surveys or small tasks in exchange for a small amount of money (i.e., \$1.00) as compensation (Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2013). This sample also had many participants who were excluded from analyses due to failure to complete the key measures within the survey ( $n = 57$ ) and failure of the attention check questions ( $n = 5$ ). Therefore, the final sample of MTurk participants ( $N = 320$ ) included 146 men, 174 women, and 2 people who identified as “other”, between the ages of 22 and 75. The mean age was 41.62 ( $SD = 12.95$ ). The sample was 78.3% White/Caucasian, 8.1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 11.8% Black/African American, 6.8% Hispanic Latino, 1.2% Native American, and .6% other. The sample was 88.5% heterosexual, 3.7% homosexual, 5.9% bisexual, and 1.9% other.

## **Materials**

**Demographics.** The survey gathered information about the participants such as age, gender, sexual orientation, and income. The sample of college students were asked to indicate if they had ever enrolled in any courses that were relevant to victimization (e.g., Women and Violence or Forensic Psychology) and to state their intended career after graduation. The general population sample was asked about their current career.

**Open-ended question.** Participants were given a brief definition of IPV (i.e., “a form of domestic violence that can include physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former intimate partner or spouse”) and were asked to explain what specific details or characteristics they would expect to see in cases of intimate partner violence in which the alleged perpetrator is

arrested by a police officer. Analysis of these open-ended responses was not within the scope of the present research and will not be discussed further.

**IPV rating questions.** Participants were asked the likelihood of possible characteristics of a typical IPV case. Specifically, questions included ratings of masculine and feminine attributes as they relate to physicality and power in a relationship. These questions were separated into victim (e.g., “the victim has little power in the relationship”;  $n = 15$ ), perpetrator (e.g., “the perpetrator has a lot of power in the relationship” ;  $n = 14$ ), and relationship ratings (e.g., “the victim and the perpetrator are equals in their relationship” ;  $n = 7$ ). There were also circumstance ratings (e.g., “the physical violence occurred in private”;  $n = 7$ ). and other filler items (e.g., “The victim and the perpetrator are in the working class”;  $n = 27$ ) included to mask the purpose of this study. They rated the likelihood of 70 total statements on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*). The items in this section were developed in consultation with an expert on IPV from The Center for Research on Violence Against Women at the University of Kentucky.

**Victimization history.** Participants were asked if they had previously been the victim of IPV or if they know anyone who has previously been the victim of IPV. The response options were “Yes”, “No”, or “Unsure or prefer not to answer.”

**Domestic violence laws.** Participants were given the definition of Officer’s Discretion Arrest laws or Mandatory Arrest laws (see Appendix). After reading each of the definitions, they were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with statements such as “this law is fair” and “if this was the law in my community, I would call the police if I suspected an incident of IPV.” Participants stated their level of agreement on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The items in this section were presented in a random order. Participants were

also asked six follow-up questions that measured their level of agreement with punitive police responses (i.e., the suspected perpetrator should always be arrested and put into jail), the likelihood that police officers arrest the wrong person (i.e., “The police could arrest the wrong person,” “It is usually clear who is the perpetrator,” “It is usually clear who is the victim”), and if they thought police should be involved with IPV cases (i.e., “It is not always the business of the police” and “It is usually a family matter<sup>4</sup>”). The presentation of the laws was also in a random order. These randomization procedures were added to control for any potential order effects.

**Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale (DVMAAS; Peters, 2008).** This scale includes 18 items that measure the level of acceptance of various myths and victim-blaming about domestic violence and had an acceptable rate of reliability ( $\alpha = .79$ ). For example, “If a woman doesn’t like it, then she can leave.” Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

**Sex Role Stereotyping Scale (SRS; Burt, 1980).** This scale includes 9 items that measures participants’ beliefs in common sex-role stereotypes and had a fair rate of reliability ( $\alpha = .52$ ). For example, “It looks worse for a woman to be drunk than for a man to be drunk”. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with these statements on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

## Procedure

For the student sample, recruitment fliers stated that the research would be asking questions about crime and would include a few short measures about social beliefs. The student sample was collected by means of a convenience sample. For the MTurk sample, the study was described in the same way it was to the student sample and participants self-selected the survey

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<sup>4</sup> This item was omitted from the student survey.

on the Mechanical Turk website. The questionnaires were administered via Qualtrics, an online survey website. Prior to starting the questionnaire, each participant provided their informed consent after reading a consent document.

Participants first provided their demographics and then completed the open-ended IPV question. Next, the questionnaire presented each section of the IPV rating questions (i.e., victim characteristics, perpetrator characteristics, relationship characteristics, and circumstance characteristics) in a randomized order. Each participant was asked about their IPV victimization history. They were then presented the domestic violence laws (i.e., mandatory arrest and officer's discretion) and related questions in a randomized order. Finally, the DVMAS and SRS were presented to the participants in a randomized order. Following the completion of the questionnaire, each student participant was asked if they would like to be entered into the raffle and if they responded yes, were asked to provide their email address (only to be used to contact each of the 4 raffle winners). The questionnaire took approximately 37 minutes for the student sample and 18 minutes for the MTurk sample to complete.

## **Results**

Descriptive statistics for select IPV characteristic ratings, by sample and participant gender, can be found in Table 1. Prior to analyses, an attempt to create aggregates for the IPV rating questions resulted in low reliability. Therefore, these questions were treated as separate items. It is also important to note that when independent samples *t*-tests were conducted, unequal variances were assumed and utilized when the Levene's test for equal variances indicated it to be necessary.

### **Hypothesis 1**



To test hypothesis 1A, that participants who more strongly endorse sex-role stereotypes will be likely to adhere to IPV myths (i.e., have higher scores on the DVMA), correlational analyses were conducted. The tests revealed that student participants who more strongly endorsed SRS statements were likely to agree with the DVMA statements ( $r = .38, p = .001$ ). Analyses of the MTurk data indicated that there was a strong positive correlation ( $r = .67, p < .001$ ) between sex-role stereotyping and DVMA scores. Individuals who endorsed sex-role stereotypes were also likely to show a high level of belief in IPV myths (e.g., “If a woman doesn’t like it, she can leave”).

To test Hypothesis 1B, that men would show higher rates of IPV myth acceptance than women, we examined gender differences in DVMA by conducting an independent samples  $t$ -test for each sample. When this test was conducted using the student sample, there was no significant difference in DVMA scores between the men and women  $t(16.05) = .589, p = .564$ . However, the results from the analyses of the MTurk sample suggest that on average, men ( $M = 46.08, SD = 19.60$ ) had higher DVMA scores than women did ( $M = 39.36, SD = 16.54$ );  $t(274.89) = 3.28, p = .001$ .

## **Hypothesis 2**

In order to test if higher levels of adherence to sex-role stereotypes and IPV myths is correlated to gendered assumptions about abusive partnerships, multiple correlational tests were conducted to look at the relationship between SRS scores, DVMA scores, and likelihood ratings of gendered assumptions about physicality and power in IPV cases (see Table 2). Student participants who more strongly endorsed the items on the SRS scale thought that it is likely the victim is feminine ( $r = .262, p = .025$ ) and that the perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim ( $r = .234, p = .046$ ). Results also suggested that participants who more strongly endorsed

items on the DVMAS were more likely to think the perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim ( $r = .296, p = .013$ ). In addition, the student sample responses to the IPV rating questionnaire suggested that if the participant rated that it is likely that the victim is male, then they also rated that it is likely that the perpetrator and the victim are homosexual ( $r = .538, p < .01$ ). Also, if the participant rated that it is likely that the victim is female then they also rated it likely that the perpetrator and the victim are heterosexual ( $r = .634, p < .01$ ).

### **Hypothesis 3**

A correlational analysis was conducted to test whether the enrollment in relevant victimization courses had a relationship with DVMAS and SRS scores. The results did not suggest that the courses had any significant relationship with participants' agreement or disagreement within the DVMAS ( $r = -.08, p = .506$ ) and SRS ( $r = .21, p = .073$ ) sections of the questionnaire. Due to limited variability in the number of courses students had taken, an exploratory correlation analysis was conducted to test whether the total semesters completed by student participants had any significant relationship with the scores on the DVMAS and the SRS. This test resulted in no significant relationship between total number of semesters completed and SRS ( $r = .09, p = .459$ ) or the DVMAS ( $r = .01, p = .944$ ).

In order to test whether students endorsed fewer myths about IPV in comparison to the general population sample, independent samples *t*-tests were conducted. The results suggested that students ( $M = 32.53, SD = 9.03$ ) had lower DVMAS scores than the general population ( $M = 42.37, SD = 18.07$ );  $t(387) = -4.43, p < .001$ . The *t*-test also revealed that the students ( $M = 18.75, SD = 6.07$ ) endorsed fewer SRS statements than the general population ( $M = 22.37, SD = 10.92$ );  $t(390) = -2.73, p = .007$ .

### **Exploratory Analysis Results**

**IPV characteristic ratings.** We chose to further analyze the students' ratings of the IPV characteristics to explore which items participants thought were likely and which they tended to be unsure about. A series of one-sample *t*-tests were conducted to analyze the amount that the student sample varied from the midpoint (4 = undecided) when responding to the items in this section that related to masculinity, femininity, physicality, and power. An adjusted *p*-value ( $p = .0013$ ) was used for these analyses due to multiple comparisons (i.e., 38 tests). It was necessary to adjust the *p*-value to decrease the likelihood of any erroneous findings due to familywise error. The results of these tests suggested that, for many of the questionnaire items, participants held strong opinions (i.e., ratings of "very likely" or "very unlikely"). However, when asked to rate the items about IPV cases that do not fit in the notion of what is typical or "legitimate", the student sample rarely deviated from the midpoint (see Figure 1). These items included the victim and the perpetrator are homosexual ( $M = 4.00, SD = 1.33; t(79) = .000, p = 1.00$ ), the victim is a man and the perpetrator is a woman ( $M = 3.83, SD = 1.48; t(79) = -1.056, p = .294$ ), the victim and the perpetrator are both women ( $M = 3.85, SD = 1.35; t(79) = -.993, p = .324$ ), and the victim and the perpetrator are both men ( $M = 3.99, SD = 1.30; t(79) = -.086, p = .932$ ).

The one-sample *t*-tests were also conducted using the MTurk sample (see Figure 2). These tests also revealed that there were some items that the participants held strong opinions on and some that they did not. However, the items that the general population sample rated as "undecided" differed from those that the student sample did. This sample was typically unsure about statements involving a victim's physicality such as the victim uses physical force to resist the abuse ( $M = 4.04, SD = 1.48; t(320) = .452, p = .652$ ) and the victim fights back using physical force ( $M = 4.04, SD = 1.36; t(390) = .041, p = .967$ ).

**IPV laws and punitive responses.** A correlational analysis of the student sample's agreement level regarding IPV-related laws showed that higher endorsement of traditional sex-role stereotypes was positively associated with the belief that it is usually clear who the victim is ( $r = .274, p = .05$ ) but there were no significant relationships found when analyzing agreement levels in IPV-related laws and IPV myth endorsement. The relationship was replicated in the general population's responses regarding the IPV-related laws. These analyses showed no statistically significant relationships in the agreement to the specific IPV-related laws and endorsement of traditional sex-role stereotypes. However, higher IPV myth endorsement was positively associated with the general belief that IPV is not always the business of the police ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ).

A series of independent samples *t*-test was also conducted to analyze the differences in endorsement of officer's discretion laws, mandatory arrest laws, and punitive responses towards perpetrators between genders in each sample. Thirteen *t*-tests were conducted to analyze these differences, so we used an adjusted *p*-value of .0038. This test resulted in no gender differences within the student sample. For the general population sample, there were no gender differences in the endorsement of officer's discretion laws. However, these tests did reveal that women ( $M = 4.25, SD = .83$ ) in the general population agreed more with the statement "I support this law" than men ( $M = 3.88, SD = 1.13$ ) when asked about mandatory arrest laws;  $t(316) = -3.33, p = .001$ . It was also revealed that women ( $M = 3.85, SD = 1.02$ ) were more likely than men ( $M = 3.32, SD = 1.22$ ) to believe that a suspected perpetrator should always be arrested and put in jail,  $t(294.12) = -4.47, p < .001$ . Women ( $M = 3.47, SD = 3.69$ ) were also less likely than men ( $M = 3.69, SD = 1.06$ ) to believe that the police could arrest the wrong person,  $t(311.02) = 3.31, p = .001$ , and to believe it is not always the business of the police,  $t(284.54) = 4.15, p < .001$ .

It was of interest to test students' endorsement of punitive responses towards perpetrators of IPV in comparison to the general population in an exploratory manner. When an independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare samples, there were no differences in endorsement of officer discretion laws and the only difference between samples regarding mandatory arrest laws was that students ( $M = 4.45, SD = .70$ ) were more likely to agree with the statement "I would call the police, if this was the law in my community" than the general population ( $M = 4.01, SD = 1.05$ );  $t(393) = 3.47, p = .001$ . Further analysis revealed that students ( $M = 4.13, SD = .92$ ) endorsed more punitive responses by police (i.e., "The suspected perpetrator should always be arrested and put into jail") significantly more than the general population sample ( $M = 3.52, SD = 1.15$ ),  $t(393) = 4.33, p < .001$ . This analysis also suggested that both samples disagreed with the statement "It is not always the business of the police", but the students ( $M = 1.76, SD = 1.03$ ) disagreed more so than the general population ( $M = 2.24, SD = 1.17$ );  $t(393) = -3.30, p = .001$ . It was also revealed that when asked to rate their agreement that police could arrest the wrong person, students ( $M = 4.04, SD = .88$ ) agreed more so than the general population ( $M = 3.45, SD = 1.14$ );  $t(139.72) = 4.93, p < .001$ .

### Discussion

The present study replicated and extended previous research that has found a relationship between endorsement of IPV myths and traditional sex-role stereotypes. Within the general population sample, the men adhered to the statements in the DVMA and SRS significantly more so than the women. These results were in line with the first hypothesis of the present research and supported much of the past research that examined gender differences. However, this gender difference was not present when the student sample was examined. Additionally, the overall scores on the DVMA were lower in the student sample than in the general population

sample. This may suggest not only a decrease in gender differences in endorsement of IPV myths and traditional sex-role beliefs but also that younger individuals are beginning to shift the way that they think about IPV. The student sample in this study was younger than the general population so the fact that students, both men and women, are showing lower rates of IPV myth adherence could be explained by a shift in beliefs in the younger generation. IPV used to be viewed as a private matter but society has shifted this perception and labeled it as a social issue (Browne, 1995). This shift in societal level perceptions may play a role in the decrease in adherence to IPV myths at the individual level. Although, it is possible that there was insufficient power to detect gender differences in the student sample due to the small number of male student participants. Further research may test for the gender differences with a larger student sample that has more power.

One of the main objectives of this research was to explore the relationship between the enrollment in victimization relevant courses and adherence to IPV myths, sex role stereotypes, and gendered misconceptions. I hypothesized that such courses would play a role in the way students adhere to IPV myths, such as that students enrolled in relevant courses would adhere to IPV myths and victim-blaming attitudes at a lower rate than the general population. However, this was not supported in the present study. Findings from the limited prior research suggested that courses focusing on victimization would have some type of effect on the way students think about the topic as it informs them about victimization characteristics. However, when the rated likelihoods of such atypical IPV cases within the student sample were analyzed, it was revealed that participants were typically unsure of how to think about “atypical” cases. Students often chose “undecided” as their rated likelihood for gendered characteristics in IPV cases that would not have matched their notions of what a “legitimate” or typical case would include (e.g., victim

is a man and perpetrator is a woman). This lack of surety could potentially explain the way that the public perceives and responds to victims that do not fit within the “typical” IPV case. It is possible that the courses taken by the students in this sample (e.g., Victimology) need to be restructured to more explicitly focus on IPV prevalence rates in cases that are viewed as “atypical”. Additionally, future research that aims to identify any relationship between education about victimization and adherence to IPV myths may choose to examine a wider variety of courses and compare across multiple different universities. It also may be of interest for future research to look at specific university policies and procedures about victimization that could affect the way individuals are forming their perceptions of IPV. It is possible that certain university policies and programs, such as the “It’s On Us Campaign” at Bridgewater State University, may play a greater role in student’s perceptions than what they are learning in the classroom.

The relationship between participants’ adherence to sex-role stereotypes and the likelihood of certain gendered assumptions about physicality and power characteristics in an IPV case was also explored. Although the results did not suggest as strong of a relationship between these variables as was expected, there were multiple statements that fit within the “legitimate” characteristics of IPV that had significant correlations with adherence to traditional sex-role stereotypes. Individuals who believe in the strict standards of masculinity and femininity that are defined by sex-role stereotypes were also likely to think that the victim is typically feminine, and that the perpetrator is typically physically stronger than the victim. Traditional sex-role stereotypes have been so deeply rooted in the history of our country that many individuals may adhere to strict standards of what it means to be a man or a woman without even thinking about

it. However, it is important that society can recognize this ingrained social structure of sex/gender roles when working on offering sufficient and supportive responses to victims of IPV.

Through placing a disproportionate focus on women who have been victimized by their male intimate partner, society may have systematically ignored IPV victimization within gender and sexual minority populations (i.e., the LGBTQ community). Where a case of IPV is inconsistent with the social roles, individuals may engage in victim-blaming (Willis et al., 1996). A victim's help-seeking behavior has been linked to beliefs about how they believe they will be perceived or treated by whomever they report their victimization to (Mendoza, 2016); so, society has placed "atypical" victims at a disadvantage to receive satisfactory assistance and support when reporting abuse. If, when reporting their victimization, they are met with victim-blaming attitudes and behaviors then there is no guarantee that they will report the violence and will likely not receive the victim's rights and services that activists in our country have been working so hard towards.

### **Limitations**

The present research was largely done in an exploratory manner and therefore much of the data collected was correlational, which lacks any results suggesting causal relationships. Furthermore, there were obvious recruitment method limitations. This research had a rather high attrition rate, specifically in the student sample. However, it is important to note that this sample was specifically targeted to attempt to analyze the relationships between undergraduate major or enrollment in victimization-relevant courses and adherence to IPV myths and traditional sex-role stereotypes. The utilization of the MTurk service also has its strengths and weaknesses. I chose to use this recruitment method because it offers a diverse sample in ways that an undergraduate student sample cannot provide. The sample that was collected through MTurk allows for this



study to be more representative of the general population and therefore allows this research to make some generalizable statements about the results. It is important to note that the participants collected through this service tend to have slightly different demographics than the general population (i.e., more educated, less religious, and more likely to be unemployed; Goodman, Cryder, & Cheema, 2013). These differences in demographics may place a limitation on the level of generalizability that this study has. However, the collection of data from two separate samples is a strength of the present research because we gained the ability to run comparison analyses of the beliefs and attitudes between the two groups.

Another important limitation to note is in the results of the reliability analysis of the SRS scale. The analysis resulted in a relatively low reliability rate ( $\alpha = .52$ ). This scale was chosen because it is a commonly used scale in much of the previous research that examined traditional sex-role stereotypes, but it is possible that the wording of some of the items on the scale may be dated and therefore did not accurately measure what it was intended to in the present study (e.g., A wife should never contradict her husband in public or a woman should be a virgin when she marries; Burt, 1980). This may be due to a shift in the way today's society currently perceives the idea of sex-roles. Future research may use an alternate, updated scale to measure individuals' adherence to gender role norms.

In summary, while there has been obvious strides in improving victim's rights and services, it is evident that our society still has much more to do in the ongoing pursuit of equality in these areas. The present research can be used as a stepping stone for a potential restructuring in not only the way that the general population is taught about victimization, but specifically placing a focus on college students and those who intend on pursuing relevant careers in their futures.

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Table 1 *Demographics and Select Ratings by Sample and Participant Gender*

	Student Sample		MTurk Sample	
	Male <i>n</i> =13	Female <i>n</i> =70	Male <i>n</i> =146	Female <i>n</i> =174
Age	24.46 (8.57)	22.39 (5.46)	41.58 (12.98)	41.81 (12.94)
Total Semesters	6.77 (2.83)	5.47 (2.96)	-	-
Total relevant classes	1.15 (1.73)	.81 (1.37)	-	-
DVMAS	34.08 (10.58)	32.21 (8.78)	46.08 (19.60)	39.36 (16.19)
SRS	18.23 (5.40)	18.98 (6.23)	23.69 (11.33)	21.29 (10.50)
The victim and perpetrator are homosexual.	3.77 (1.30)	4.03 (1.35)	3.51 (1.32)	3.40 (1.38)
The victim is a man and the perpetrator is a woman.	3.31 (1.12)	3.92 (1.54)	3.32 (1.67)	3.03 (1.63)
The victim and the perpetrator are both women.	3.62 (.77)	3.91 (1.44)	3.29 (1.50)	3.03 (1.40)
The victim and the perpetrator are both men.	4.15 (.99)	3.94 (1.36)	3.39 (1.43)	3.32 (1.47)
The perpetrator should always be arrested and put into jail	4.00 (1.00)	4.16 (.92)	3.26 (1.22)	3.74 (1.04)
The police could arrest the wrong person.	3.92 (.88)	4.07 (.89)	3.67 (1.08)	3.26 (1.17)
IPV is not always the business of the police.	1.92 (.95)	1.74 (1.05)	2.53 (1.23)	1.99 (1.06)
It is usually clear who is the perpetrator.	2.77 (.93)	3.43 (1.18)	3.26 (1.23)	3.62 (1.26)
It is usually clear who is the victim.	3.08 (.83)	3.66 (1.12)	3.28 (1.25)	3.64 (1.21)

*Note:* Data presented is *M(SD)*.

Table 2 *Correlation Matrix for IPV Characteristics Likelihood Ratings for MTurk Sample and Student Sample*

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Total classes	.32* *	-.08	.21	.09	.16	.30**	.07	.16	-.07	-.12	.01	.09	.09	.13	-.02	.25*	.01	-.02	.04	.12
2. Total semesters	-	.01	.09	-.04	-.18	-.15	-.12	.06	-.12	-.05	.01	.03	-.10	-.01	.03	-.04	-.12	-.14	-.10	-.13
3. DVMAS	-	-	.38**	-.10	.01	.13	.01	-.13	.10	-.03	.03	.03	.17	-.03	-.02	.02	.12	.27*	.08	-.17
4. SRS	-	.67* *	-	.05	.13	.26*	.16	-.23	.01	-.10	.06	.05	-.01	.10	-.14	.15	.10	.05	.25*	-.10
5. The victim is a male.	-	.17* *	.12*	-	-.17	-.13	.41**	.01	.16	.10	.20	-.01	-.11	.58**	.40**	-.28*	.10	.01	-.18	.58* *
6. The victim is a female.	-	- .14*	-.11	-.32**	-	.60**	-.15	.22*	-.37**	.40**	-.24*	.22	.57**	-.38**	-.50**	.59**	-.03	-.11	.761* *	-.17
7. The victim is feminine.	-	-.07	-.06	-.24**	.70**	-	.02	.07	-.15	-.23*	-.07	.18	.41**	-.12	-.28*	.51**	.22	.11	.63**	-.11
8. The victim is masculine.	-	.19* *	.13*	.64**	-.36**	-.36**	-	-.24*	.18	.15	.27*	-.08	-.15	.48**	.36**	-.16	.13	-.18	.01	.26* *
9. The victim has little power in the relationship.	-	- .23* *	-.18**	-.20**	.37**	.38**	-.23**	-	-.12	-.29**	-.08	.11	.29*	-.21	-.17	.19	-.11	.03	.09	.10
10. The victim has a lot of power in the relationship.	-	.47* *	.34**	.45**	-.31**	-.25**	.52**	-.47**	-	.36**	.58**	-.13	-.34**	.41**	.44**	-.22	.06	.21	-.27*	.21
11. The victim has a lot of control in the relationship.	-	.41* *	.32**	.36**	-.28**	-.24**	.44**	-.53**	.73**	-	.51**	-.22*	-.40**	.31**	.29*	-.48**	-.01	.12	-.35**	.17
12. The victim has a dominant role in the relationship.	-	.45* *	.35**	.46**	-.27**	-.23	.50**	-.35**	.73**	.65**	-	-.26*	-.33**	.45**	.47**	-.30**	.08	.18	-.11	.28*
13. The victim has a submissive role in the relationship.	-	- .20* *	-.14*	-.14*	.40**	.41**	-.26**	.58**	-.44**	-.40**	-.34**	-	.24*	-.20	-.15	.20	.02	.004	.23*	-.06
14. The victim is physically weaker than the perpetrator.	-	-.07	-.04	-.17**	.48**	.50**	-.28**	.44**	-.29**	-.28**	-.23**	.51**	-	-.41**	-.31**	.51**	.13	.08	.50**	-.15
15. The victim is physically stronger than the perpetrator.	-	.30* *	.23**	.46**	-.37**	-.37**	.54**	-.50**	.65**	.66**	.62**	-.39**	-.38**	-	.60**	-.48**	.13	.11	-.29*	.40* *
16. The victim is physically larger than the perpetrator.	-	.27* *	.19**	.54**	-.33**	-.32**	.61**	-.36**	.63**	.54**	.67**	-.35**	-.31**	.69**	-	-.44**	.12	.07	-.26*	.39* *



17. The victim is physically smaller than the perpetrator.	-	-.07	-.01	-.22**	.46**	.49**	-.30**	.42**	-.31**	-.23**	-.18**	.48**	.51**	-.37**	-.43**	-	.07	.03	.51**	-.24*
18. Victim uses physical force to resist the abuse.	-	.27*	.14*	.21**	-.15**	-.06	.25**	-.19**	.33**	.33**	.34**	-.18**	-.07	.28**	.26**	-.06	-	.61*	.06	-.001

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
19. Victim fights back using physical force.	-	.30**	.14*	.29**	-.11	-.05	.27**	-.18**	.30**	.31**	.36**	-.16**	-.06	.33**	.37**	-.07	.68**	-	-.02	.06
20. The perpetrator is male.	-	-.16**	-.12*	-.27**	.71**	.66**	-.34**	.29**	-.26**	-.24**	-.25**	.37**	.46**	-.31**	-.30**	.39**	-.08	-.07	-	-.23*
21. The perpetrator is female.	-	.20**	.14*	.67**	-.41**	-.37**	.69**	-.23**	.52**	.48**	.52**	-.22**	-.25**	.55**	.62**	-.27**	.33**	.31**	-.46**	-
22. The perpetrator is masculine.	-	-.05	-.05	-.27**	.61**	.62**	-.32**	.34**	-.23**	-.25**	-.25**	.36**	.48**	-.35**	-.27**	.41**	-.09	-.05	.68**	-.37**
23. The perpetrator is feminine.	-	.16**	.11	.64**	-.38**	-.35**	.68**	-.25**	.47**	.45**	.46**	-.18**	-.28**	.55**	.57**	-.23**	.26**	.30**	-.45**	.82**
24. The perpetrator has little power in the relationship.	-	.44**	.34**	.41**	-.22**	-.19**	.44**	-.40**	.64**	.57**	.56**	-.41**	-.26**	.57**	.53**	-.29**	.23**	.33**	-.20**	.45**
25. The perpetrator has a lot of power in the relationship.	-	-.24**	-.18**	-.12**	.28**	.23**	-.18**	.54**	-.39**	-.41**	-.34**	.51**	.45**	-.35**	-.25**	.35**	-.20**	-.12**	.32**	-.11*
26. The perpetrator has a dominant role in the relationship.	-	-.27**	-.22**	-.21**	.44**	.43**	-.25**	.57**	-.49**	-.49**	-.45**	.59**	.45**	-.46**	-.36**	.43**	-.27**	-.17**	.45**	-.28**
27. The perpetrator has a lot of control in the relationship.	-	-.26**	-.19**	-.16**	.36**	.31**	-.17**	.47**	-.33**	-.39**	-.31**	.47**	.40**	-.30**	-.21**	.30**	-.18**	-.16**	.37**	-.18**
28. The perpetrator has a submissive role in the relationship.	-	.39**	.34**	.38**	-.28**	-.27**	.48**	-.34**	.64**	.56**	.59**	-.37**	-.24**	.54**	.57**	-.24**	.30**	.37**	-.33**	.54**
29. The perpetrator is physically weaker than the victim.	-	.25**	.20**	.53**	-.34**	-.29**	.62**	-.27**	.59**	.46**	.55**	-.24**	.30**	.60**	.64**	-.32**	.26**	.27**	-.38**	.62**
30. The perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim.	-	-.16**	-.10	-.31**	.54**	.49**	-.41**	.44**	-.37**	-.33**	-.29**	.48**	.59**	-.47**	-.48**	.58**	-.04	-.07	.56**	-.36**

31. The perpetrator is physically larger than the victim.	-	-.19**	-.13*	-.25**	.52**	.49**	-.30**	.28**	-.25**	-.19**	-.29**	.36**	.46**	-.38**	-.35**	.45**	.01	-.07	.59**	-.29**
32. The perpetrator is physically smaller than the victim.	-	.23**	.16**	.55**	-.34**	-.34**	.65**	-.27**	.58**	.50**	.53**	-.27**	-.32**	.59**	.67**	-.34**	.24**	.28**	-.37**	.70**
33. The perpetrator harms the victim using physical force.	-	-.20**	-.20**	-.17**	.39**	.36**	-.28**	.43**	-.31**	-.35**	-.32**	.49**	.50**	-.38**	-.38**	.47**	-.10	-.05	.45**	-.25**
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
34. The victim and the perpetrator are heterosexual.	-	.01	.02	-.12*	.39**	.39**	-.15**	.20**	-.06**	-.07	-.08	.29**	.32**	-.13*	-.10	.26**	-.03	-.01	.47**	-.17**
35. The victim and the perpetrator are homosexual.	-	.13*	.11*	.48*	-.28**	-.26**	.54**	-.13*	.38**	.32**	.32**	-.15**	-.23**	.39**	.46**	-.21**	.24**	.23**	-.24**	.69**
36. The victim is a woman and the perpetrator is a man.	-	-.13*	-.12*	-.25**	.56**	.47**	-.30**	.42**	-.30**	-.27**	-.30**	.36**	.44**	-.41**	-.35**	.43**	-.13**	-.12**	.55**	-.33**
37. The victim is a man and the perpetrator is a woman.	-	.12*	.09	.51**	-.36**	-.25**	.57**	-.17**	.39**	.33**	.40**	-.18**	-.16**	.44**	.46**	-.19**	.21**	.23**	-.33**	.64**
38. The victim and the perpetrator are both women.	-	.18**	.15**	.53**	-.33**	-.32**	.57**	-.22**	.42**	.37**	.36**	-.22**	-.18**	.47**	.50**	-.26**	.23**	.28**	-.30**	.72**
39. The victim and the perpetrator are both men.	-	.11	.07	.51**	-.26**	-.26**	.55**	-.08	.35**	.28**	.33**	-.15**	-.10	.37**	.43**	-.19**	.26**	.28**	-.25**	.66**
40. The victim and perpetrator are equals in their relationship.	-	.39**	.31**	.42**	-.22**	-.17**	.43**	-.35**	.63**	.55**	.61**	-.32**	-.16**	.56**	.56**	-.18**	.33**	.33**	-.28**	.50**

	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
1. Total classes	.13	-.02	-.02	.07	-.02	.05	.17	.21	.10	-.003	.07	-.10	.04	.13	.12	.02	.07	.18	-.04
2. Total semesters	.07	-.22*	.01	-.08	-.12	-.04	.00	.05	-.17	-.07	.01	-.28*	-.19	-.02	-.19	-.24*	-.19	-.07	.04
3. DVMAS	.21	-.13	.02	.03	.03	.03	-.14	-.26*	.30*	.18	-.13	.04	-.003	-.12	-.08	.002	-.14	-.12	.21
4. SRS	.20	-.09	-.12	.05	.04	.09	-.13	-.14	.23*	.07	-.10	-.01	.15	-.01	.15	-.003	-.11	-.19	.05

5. The victim is a male.	-.38**	.50**	.02	-.02	-.08	-.12	.05	.32**	-.03	-.17	.29*	-.09	-.04	.54**	-.02	.44**	.33**	.43**	.25*
6. The victim is a female.	.59**	-.24**	-.19	.42*	.45**	.42**	-.37**	-.36**	.33**	.55**	-.37*	.31**	.63**	.09	.71**	-.03	-.07	.08	-.44**
7. The victim is feminine.	.53**	.06	.03	.23*	.34**	.32**	-.10	-.19	.44**	.41**	-.17	.24*	.41**	.05	.41**	-.06	-.11	-.05	-.12
8. The victim is masculine.	-.23	.48**	.15	-.02	-.06	-.21	.21	.40**	.04	-.12	.20	-.24**	-.13	.29**	-.08	.22	.33**	.37**	.25**
9. The victim has little power in the relationship.	.13	-.05	-.31*	.12	.31**	.18	-.15	-.20	.13	.23	-.10	.27*	.15	.10	.09	-.01	.03	.08	-.17
10. The victim has a lot of power in the relationship.	-.25*	.21	.19	-.31*	-.46**	-.33**	.26**	.32**	-.17	-.35**	.34*	-.22	-.12	-.01	-.22	.12	.06	-.09	.27*
11. The victim has a lot of control in the relationship.	-.32**	.25*	.26*	-.25*	-.39**	-.39**	.37**	.34**	-.29**	-.50**	.19	-.15	-.22	.10	-.23*	.01	.12	.06	.32
12. The victim has a dominant role in the relationship.	-.18	.31**	.28*	-.22	-.32**	-.36**	.30**	-.32**	-.19	-.32**	.20	-.15	-.09	.05	-.12	.09	.03	.01	.47**
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
13. The victim has a submissive role in the relationship.	.28*	-.17	-.15	.14	.28*	.23	-.23	-.21	.23*	.18	-.17	.08	.15	.02	.14	-.13	-.02	-.01	-.18
14. The victim is physically weaker than the perpetrator.	.39**	-.30**	-.20	.30*	.34**	.45**	-.28*	-.61**	.53**	.62**	-.22	.32**	.48**	.02	.36**	.01	-.05	.08	-.26*
15. The victim is physically stronger than the perpetrator.	-.38**	.51**	.12	-.25*	-.38**	-.37**	.28*	.52**	-.24*	-.51**	.50*	-.37**	-.33**	.28*	-.22	.16	.25*	.23*	.30**
16. The victim is physically larger than the perpetrator.	-.34**	.47**	.09	-.06	-.15	-.22	.27*	.47**	-.17	-.39**	.47*	-.21	-.17	.13	-.33**	.21	.23*	.18	.38**
17. The victim is physically smaller than the perpetrator.	.50**	-.30**	-.16	.37*	.36**	.54**	-.30**	-.36**	.42**	.57**	-.35*	.39**	.35**	-.08	.34**	-.09	-.17	-.06	-.30**
18. Victim uses physical force to resist the abuse.	.10	.04	.18	.18	.11	.13	-.02	-.03	.32**	.07	.01	.22	.23*	-.10	.25*	-.05	-.01	.00	.22
19. Victim fights back using physical force.	.10	.01	-.08	.07	-.03	.08	.12	-.13	.29*	.03	.10	.32**	.20	-.17	.16	.04	-.09	-.09	.19

20. The perpetrator is male.	.49**	-.16	-.12	.27*	.37**	.27*	-.25*	-.45**	.44**	.56**	-.35*	.30**	.57**	.03	.55**	-.10	-.16	.01	-.25*
21. The perpetrator is female.	-.24**	.71**	.06	.16	.07	.07	.04	.31**	-.01	-.13	.32*	.03	.05	.42**	-.07	.54**	.54**	.36**	.26*
22. The perpetrator is masculine.	-	-.36**	-.23*	.45*	.57**	.44**	-.32**	-.40**	.43**	.50**	-.44*	.36**	.52**	-.12**	.38**	-.07	-.09	-.07	-.40**
23. The perpetrator is feminine.	-.38**	-	.21	.03	-.12	-.07	.14	.49**	-.17	-.24*	.44*	-.09	-.12	.45**	-.15	.50**	.47**	.46**	.30**
24. The perpetrator has little power in the relationship.	-.23**	.46**	-	-.47*	-.44**	-.43**	.24*	.22	-.16	-.18	.25*	-.29**	-.28*	.18	-.19	-.08	.01	.04	.38*
25. The perpetrator has a lot of power in the relationship.	.41**	-.13*	-.42*	-	.67**	.78**	-.41**	-.11	.38**	.38**	-.27*	.44**	.39**	-.004	.25*	.22	.25*	.21	-.34**
26. The perpetrator has a dominant role in the relationship.	.52**	-.29**	-.47*	.63*	-	.67**	-.40**	-.37**	.40**	.51**	-.40*	.49**	.50**	-.01	.23*	.13	.17	.11	-.33**
27. The perpetrator has a lot of control in the relationship.	.39**	-.19**	-.36*	.55*	.61**	-	-.49**	-.32**	.40**	.43**	-.27*	.49**	.42**	.01	.12	.15	.14	.09	-.35**
28. The perpetrator has a submissive role in the relationship.	-.25**	.53**	.64*	-.35*	-.42**	-.33**	-	.29**	-.33**	-.39**	.28*	-.18	-.23*	-.08	-.13	-.17	-.07	.02	.29*
29. The perpetrator is physically weaker than the victim.	-.28**	.63**	.53*	-.26*	-.38**	-.23**	.58**	-	-.46**	-.52**	.55*	-.37**	-.34**	.22**	-.25**	.26*	.30**	.21	.28*
30. The perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim.	.57**	-.39**	-.37*	.42*	.52**	.38**	-.32**	-.45**	-	.62**	-.39*	.42**	.46**	-.06	.23*	.11	.06	-.02	-.05
31. The perpetrator is physically larger than the victim.	.55**	-.35**	-.30*	.38*	.45**	.41**	-.30**	-.40**	.66**	-	-.42*	.50**	.52**	-.04	.42**	-.004	-.04	.07	-.21
32. The perpetrator is physically smaller than the victim.	-.33**	.69**	.56*	-.18*	-.37**	-.16**	.62**	.76**	-.46**	-.34**	-	-.36**	-.28**	.27*	-.21	.19	.26*	.21	.25*
33. The perpetrator harms the victim using physical force.	.46**	-.23**	-.33*	.49*	.56**	.43**	-.32**	-.35**	.63**	.55**	-.34*	-	.41**	-.02	.26*	.11	.01	.06	-.06

34. The victim and the perpetrator are heterosexual.	.42**	-.17**	-.07	.22*	.34**	.23**	-.09	-.15**	.37**	.33**	-.16*	.33**	-	-.09	.54**	.22	-.06	-.004	-.28*
35. The victim and the perpetrator are homosexual.	-.25**	.64**	.37*	.01	-.14*	-.09	.42**	.43**	-.25**	-.18**	.57*	-.13*	-.17**	-	.04	.30**	.51**	.69**	.18
36. The victim is a woman and the perpetrator is a man.	.55**	-.31**	-.27*	.39*	.52**	.36**	-.26**	-.32**	.50**	.45**	-.29*	.45**	.53**	-.24**	-	-.14	-.10	.07	-.31**
37. The victim is a man and the perpetrator is a woman.	-.30**	.64**	.37*	-.13*	-.21**	-.14**	.40**	.48**	-.32**	-.27**	.53*	-.17**	-.15**	.53**	-.32**	-	.46**	.27**	.02
38. The victim and the perpetrator are both women.	-.28**	.65**	.49*	-.12*	-.23**	-.16**	.48**	.48**	-.30**	-.23**	.60*	-.22**	-.20**	.75**	-.34**	.58**	-	.61**	.17
39. The victim and the perpetrator are both men.	-.23**	.61**	.39*	-.02	-.14*	-.06	.45**	.47**	-.21**	-.16**	.58*	-.08	-.21**	.73**	-.21**	.52**	.77**	-	.15
40. The victim and perpetrator are equals in their relationship.	-.15**	.50**	.60*	-.32*	.42**	-.32**	.55**	.50**	-.28**	-.23**	.52*	-.32**	-.09	.36**	-.27**	.41**	.48**	.41**	-

Note. Correlations for student participants are presented above the diagonal; correlations for MTurk participants are presented below the diagonal. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

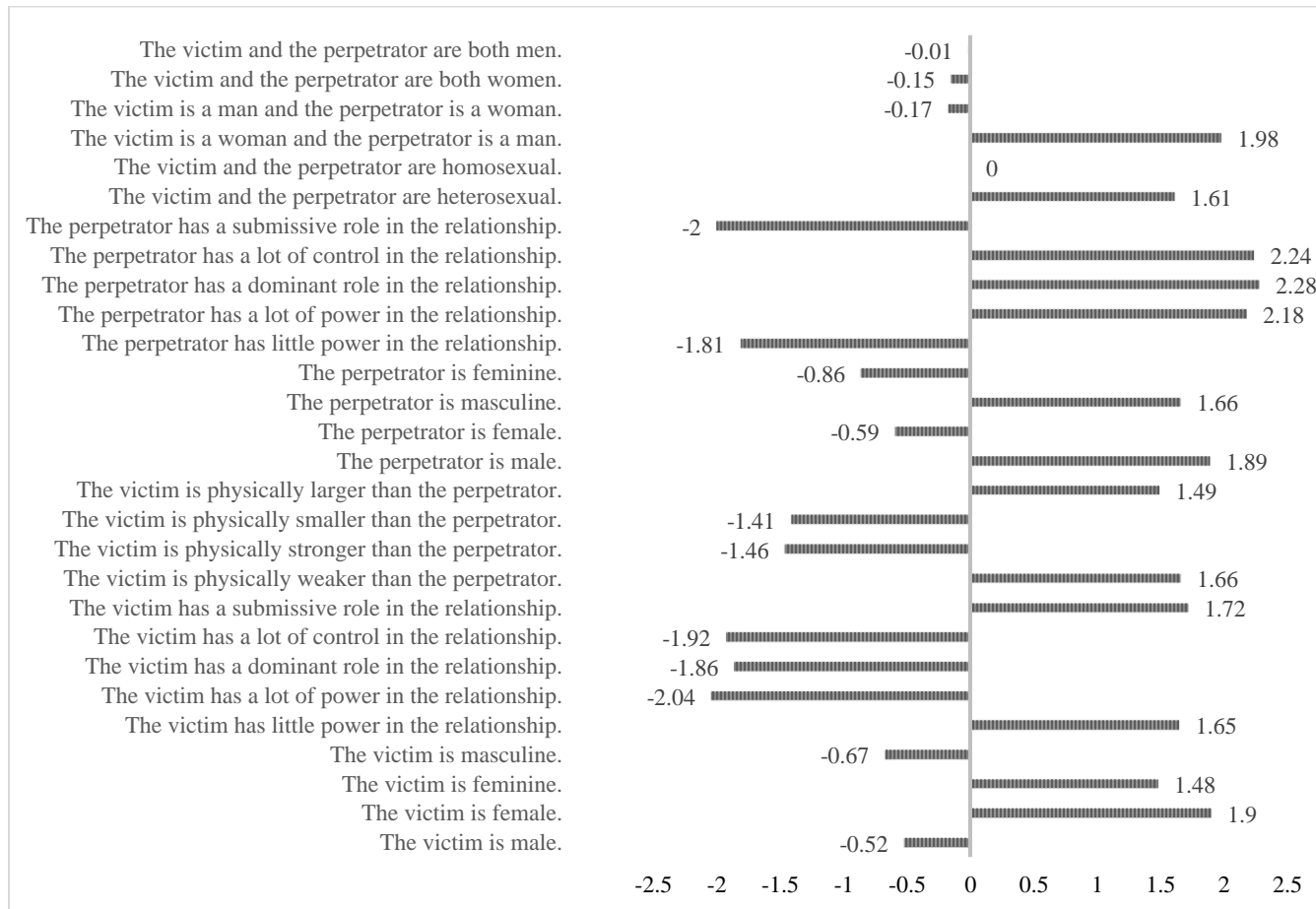


Figure 1. Mean differences in gendered assumptions in the student sample.

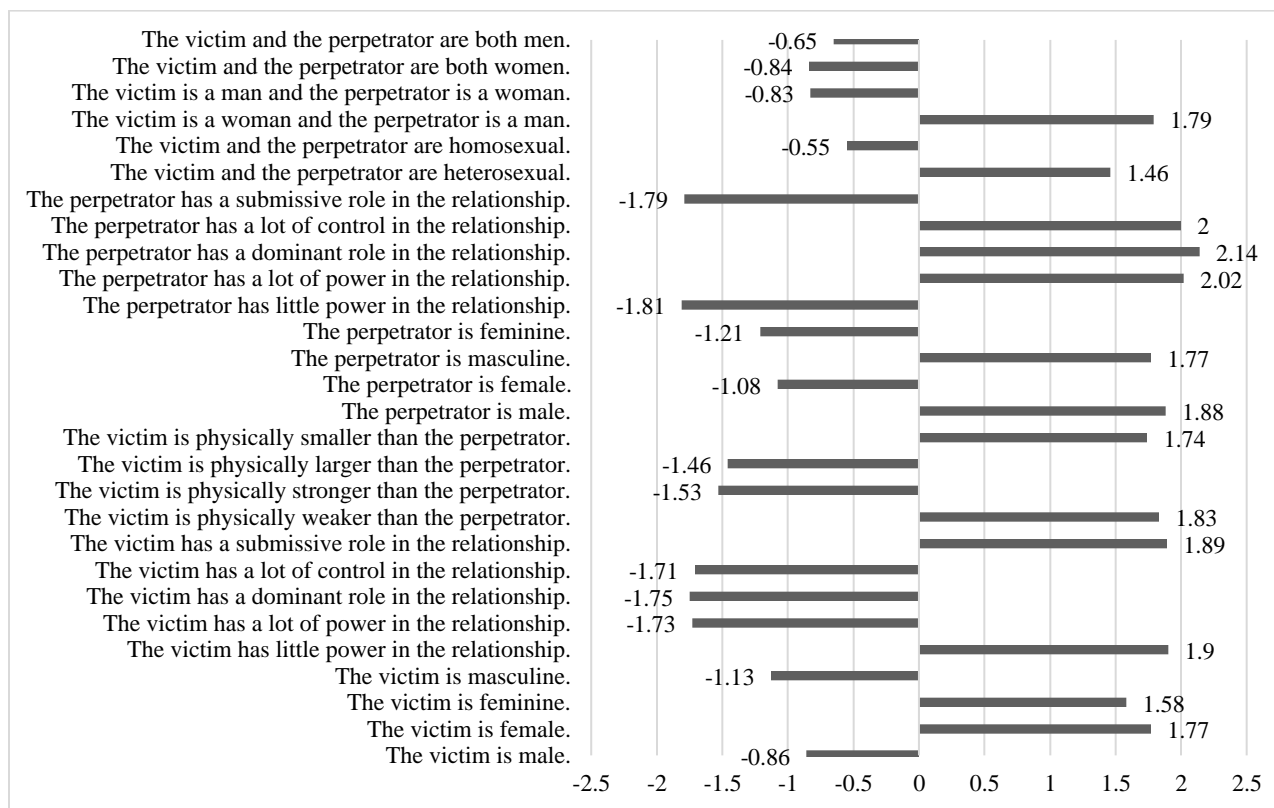


Figure 2. Mean differences in gendered assumptions in the Mechanical Turk sample.

Appendix

In potential cases of intimate partner violence, Officer’s Discretion laws state that the decision to arrest the suspected perpetrator is solely based on if the officer believes making an arrest is appropriate in a specific situation. Discretion is the power or right to use one’s own judgement when deciding to make an arrest.

Based on this information, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
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- This law is fair.
- This law guarantees safety for the victims.
- I support this law.
- If this was the law in my community, I would call the police if I suspected an incident of IPV.

In potential cases of intimate partner violence, Mandatory Arrest laws state that, with probable cause to believe that abuse has occurred, an officer must arrest the suspected perpetrator. Probable cause is when there is a reasonable basis for believing that a crime may have been committed or when evidence of the crime is present in the place to be searched.

Based on this information, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
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- This law is fair.
- This law guarantees safety for the victims.
- I support this law.
- If this was the law in my community, I would call the police if I suspected an incident of IPV.